

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 10

CHICAGO TRIBUNE
10 May 1985

Hollywood's stable of experts

The Democratic House Task Force on Agriculture this week called as expert witnesses actresses Jane Fonda, Jessica Lange and Sissy Spacek, all of whom recently starred in farm movies.

—News Item.

The chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce looked at all the front-page newspaper photos of Jane Fonda, Jessica Lange and Sissy Spacek tearfully testifying on the problems of farmers. The Committee on Energy and Commerce hadn't been on the front pages since two of its members got in a fist fight during the last energy crisis over whose picture would appear on gas rationing stamps.

The chairman decided to call a hearing on nuclear power and invite Miss Fonda, star of the anti-nuclear movie "China Syndrome," to testify. He also invited Miss Lange and Miss Spacek. They hadn't starred in any nuclear power movies but he figured they could comfort Miss Fonda during her testimony.

Miss Fonda's agent said she had to decline as she was busy testifying before the Committee on Education and Labor about women in the work place as star of the movie "Nine to Five." Miss Lange, costar of "Tootsie," was testifying before the House Task Force on the Problems of Transvestites in a Male Dominated Society. Miss Spacek was still crying from her testimony before the Task Force on Agriculture.

Instead, the chairman called a hearing on the use of high-sulfur coal and called as witnesses country singer Loretta Lynn, subject of

Michael Kilian

the movie "Coal Miner's Daughter," singer Crystal Gayle, sister of "Coal Miner's Daughter," and Miss Spacek, star of "Coal Miner's Daughter," in hopes that Miss Spacek had stopped crying.

She had, but she was busy testifying as star of the movie "Carrie" before a House Task Force on Violence in the Schools. Miss Lynn and Miss Gayle did appear, however, singing a duet that sold a million records and got the committee hearing on the front page of Variety. "C & W Boffo on Cap Hill," the headline read.

The chairman of the Armed Services Committee was disgusted. His committee dealt with extremely important matters, such as deployment of the MX missile, and you never saw stories about that on the front page of Variety. But there was still a chance for People magazine.

He called a hearing on the MX and invited Lee Marvin, star of "The Dirty Dozen;" Alan Alda, star of "M*A*S*H"; and John Wayne, star of "The Green Berets," to testify. Mr. Marvin called Mr. Alda a wimp. Mr. Alda called Mr. Marvin an insensitive warmonger who probably used live ammunition in all his combat scenes. Mr. Wayne's son informed the committee that his father was unfortunately dead but if still alive would undoubtedly support the MX and enjoy having a drink with Mr. Marvin. Miss Fonda appeared, asking if she could testify in the late Mr. Wayne's place, and was decked by Mr. Marvin. The hearing didn't make People, but

Mr. Marvin was featured on the cover of Soldier of Fortune magazine.

Holding a special hearing on CIA activities in Central America, the Select Committee on Intelligence called as expert witnesses Sean Connery, star of most of the James Bond movies; Roger Moore, star of almost all the other James Bond movies; and Sir Alec Guinness, who played George Smiley in all the John LeCarre spy movies. As Intelligence Committee sessions are always held in secret, there was no news coverage, which was just as well, because the three witnesses were British subjects without a security clearance or a need to know.

However, word of the closed session was leaked to the New York Times, which ran a front-page story headlined, "British Agents Infiltrate Intelligence Unit." The Washington Post put the story down with one of its own, which noted that none of the British actors had taken his agent.

Reading in TV Guide that Bugs Bunny, the Smurfs and Batman had been invited to testify before a hearing on children's television viewing, the speaker of the House decided he'd had enough. With all the action the committees and task forces were getting, his name hadn't appeared in a paper for weeks, not even in the Boston Globe.

So he decided on a bit of one-upmanship and called for a joint session of the Congress featuring a famous movie actor who had an opinion on absolutely everything. President Reagan responded immediately that he'd be happy to appear.